



US009420682B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Klein

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,420,682 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Aug. 16, 2016**

(54) **HETEROGENEOUS THERMAL INTERFACE**

(56) **References Cited**

(71) Applicant: **ABL IP Holding LLC**, Conyers, GA
(US)

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

(72) Inventor: **Stephen Klein**, Gahanna, OH (US)

2004/0222433 A1 * 11/2004 Mazzochette H01L 25/0753
257/99

(73) Assignee: **ABL IP Holding LLC**, Decatur, GA
(US)

2005/0051359 A1 * 3/2005 Logothetis H01L 23/66
174/260

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 241 days.

2007/0007540 A1 * 1/2007 Hashimoto H01L 33/642
257/94

(21) Appl. No.: **14/189,587**

2010/0071936 A1 * 3/2010 Tan H05K 1/0204
174/252

(22) Filed: **Feb. 25, 2014**

2011/0272179 A1 * 11/2011 Vasoya H05K 1/0204
174/252

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

2013/0068439 A1 * 3/2013 Zeng F21V 29/20
165/185

US 2014/0240929 A1 Aug. 28, 2014

2014/0126203 A1 * 5/2014 Kachala F21V 29/22
362/235

2015/0219285 A1 * 8/2015 Rantala H01L 33/62
362/249.02

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

DE 102010029529 A1 * 12/2011 H05K 1/0203

* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner — Anthony Haughton

Assistant Examiner — Yahya Ahmad

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Kilpatrick Townsend &
Stockton, LLP

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/768,889, filed on Feb.
25, 2013.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(51) **Int. Cl.**

H05K 7/20 (2006.01)

H05K 1/02 (2006.01)

H05K 3/00 (2006.01)

H01L 23/42 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **H05K 1/0203** (2013.01); **H05K 3/0061**
(2013.01); **H01L 23/42** (2013.01); **H01L**
2924/0002 (2013.01); **H05K 2201/10106**
(2013.01); **Y10T 29/4913** (2015.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

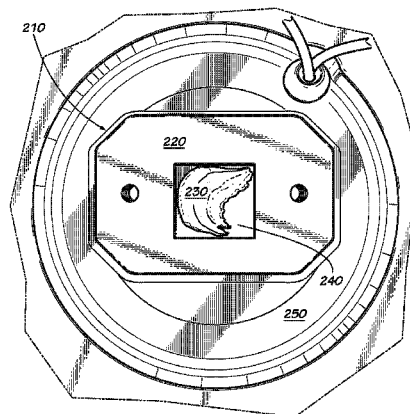
CPC H05K 1/0203; H05K 3/0061; H05K
2201/10106; H01L 2924/0002; H01L 23/42;
Y10T 29/4913

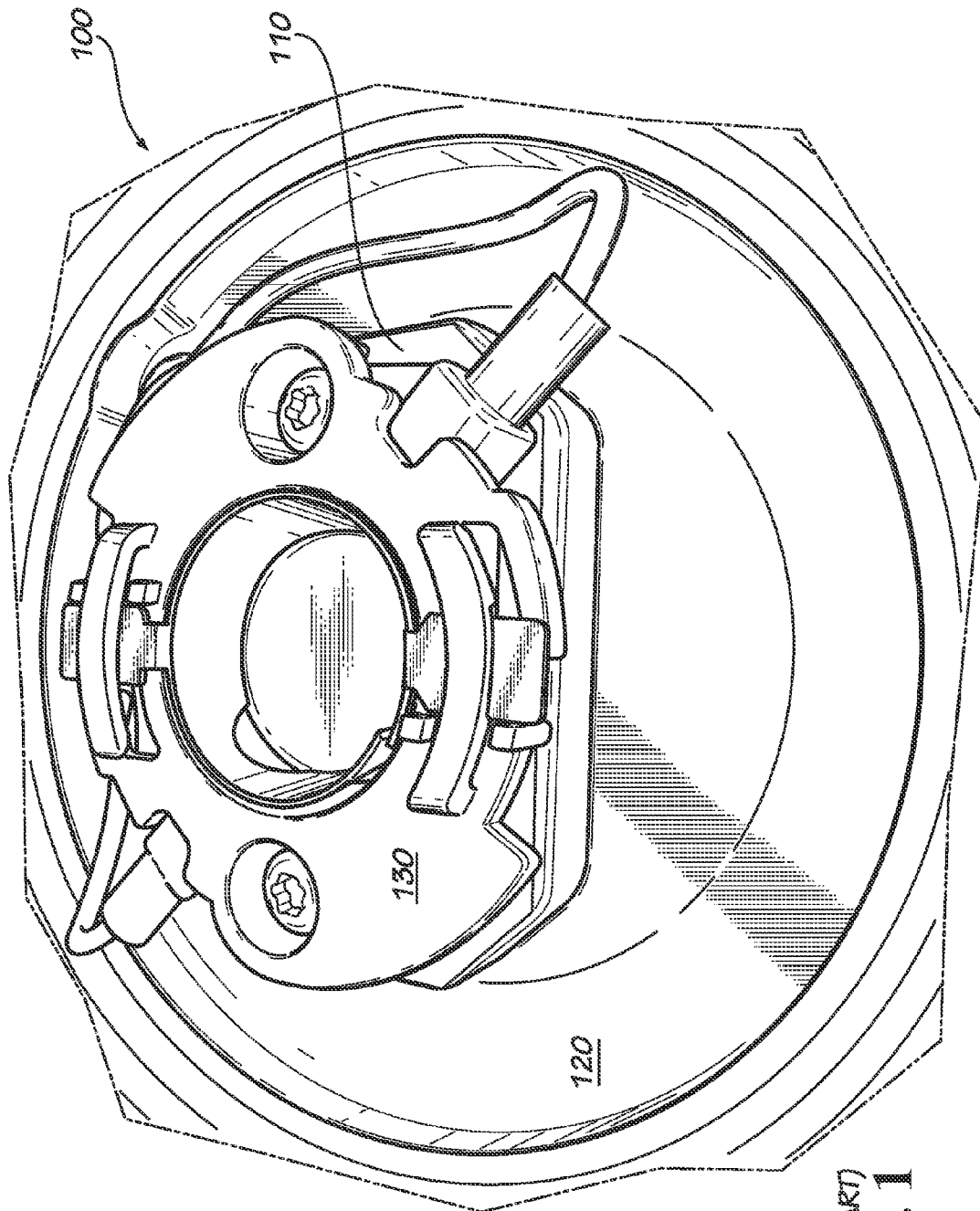
USPC 361/688–723

See application file for complete search history.

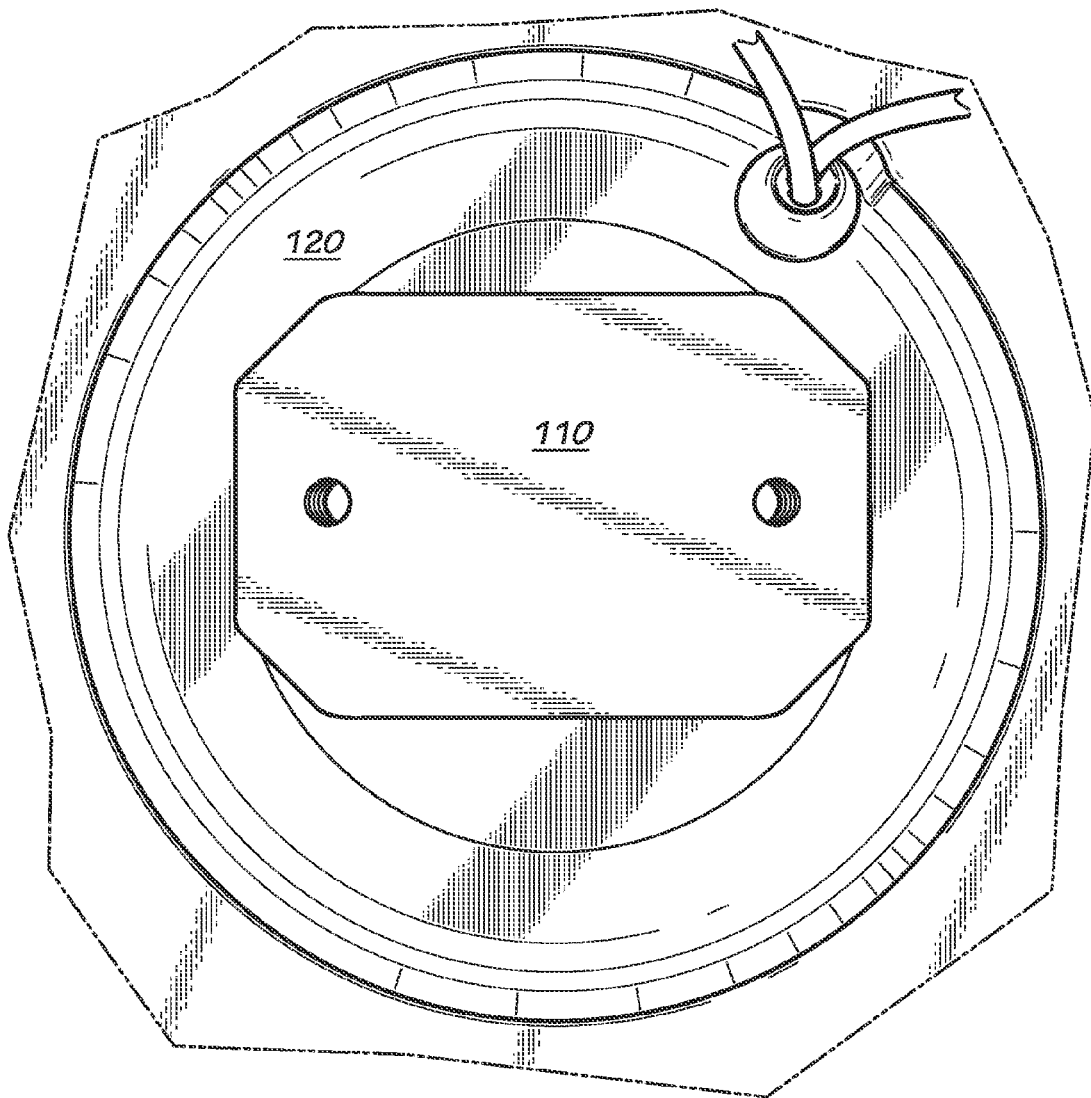
An electronic apparatus, such as a lighting fixture, includes a substrate, an electronic device such as a chip-on-board light emitting diode and a thermal interface located between the substrate and the electronic device. The thermal interface includes at least two distinct materials, including a dielectric material and a thermally conductive material. The dielectric material includes a cutout into which the thermally conductive material is located. The dielectric material can completely surround the perimeter of the electronic device or can be located proximate portions of the electronic device that are prone to arcing in order to protect the substrate from arcing. The electronic apparatus operates at a reduced temperature as compared to an electronic apparatus that does not include the thermal interface. Methods for making an electronic apparatus having a thermal interface with a discrete dielectric material and thermally conductive material are also described.

20 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets





(PRIOR ART)
FIG. 1



(PRIOR ART)
FIG. 2

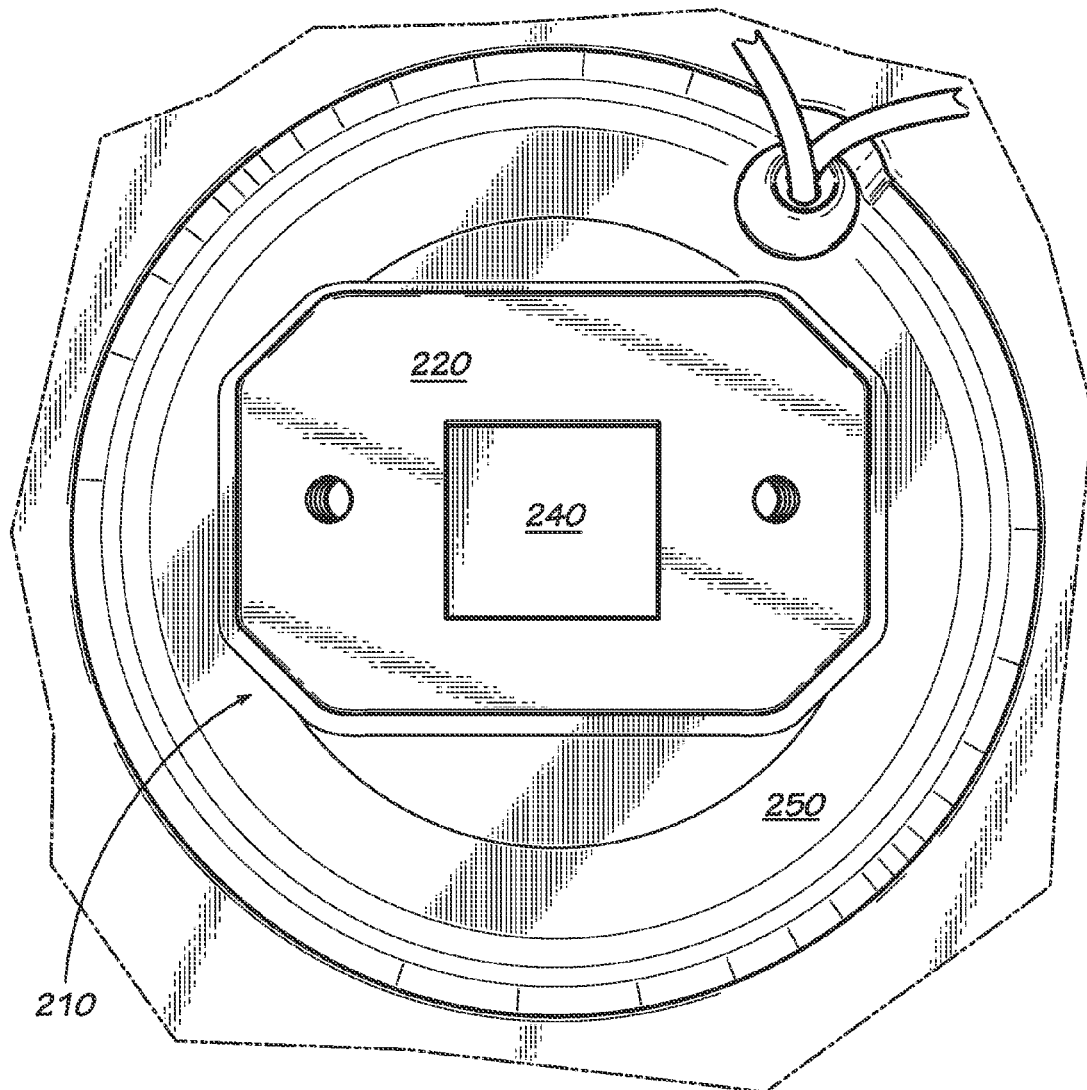


FIG. 3

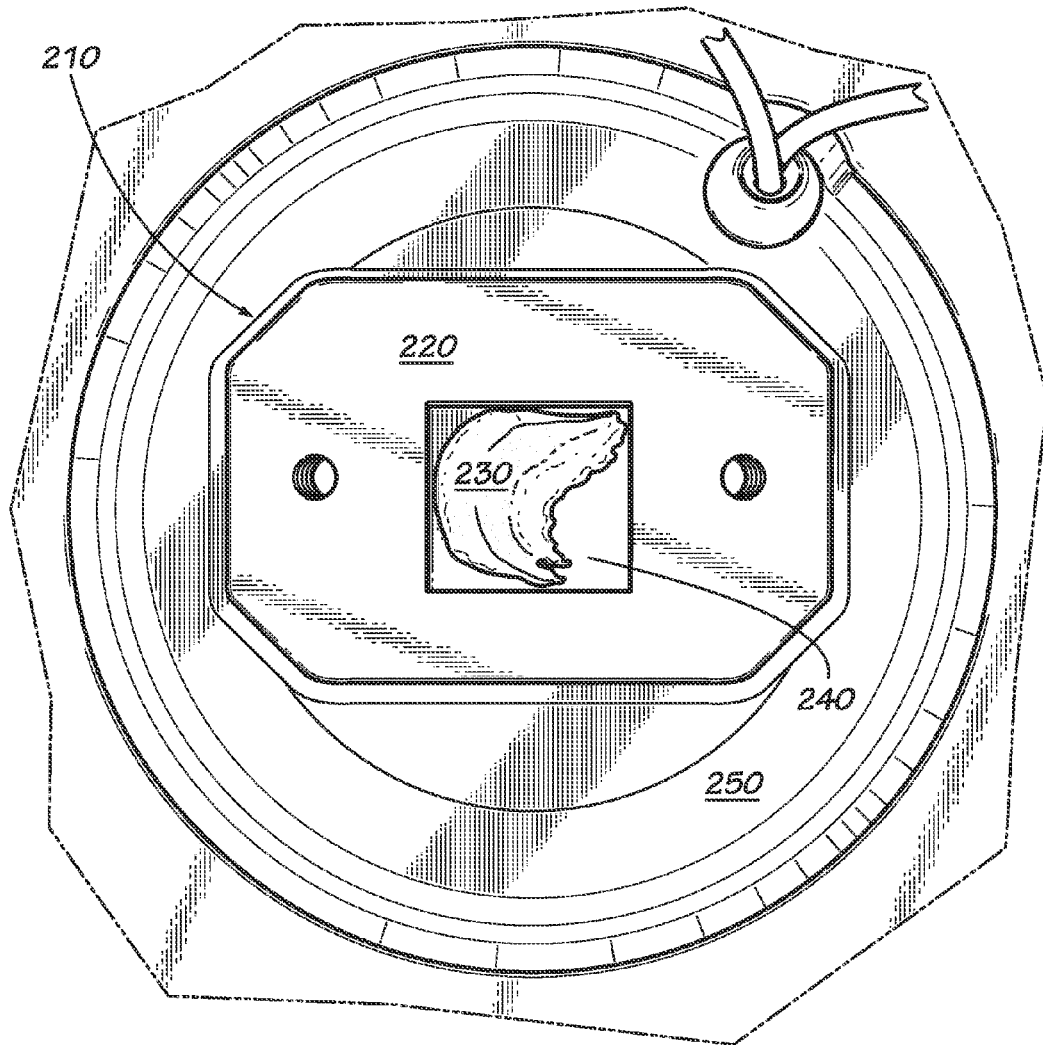


FIG. 4

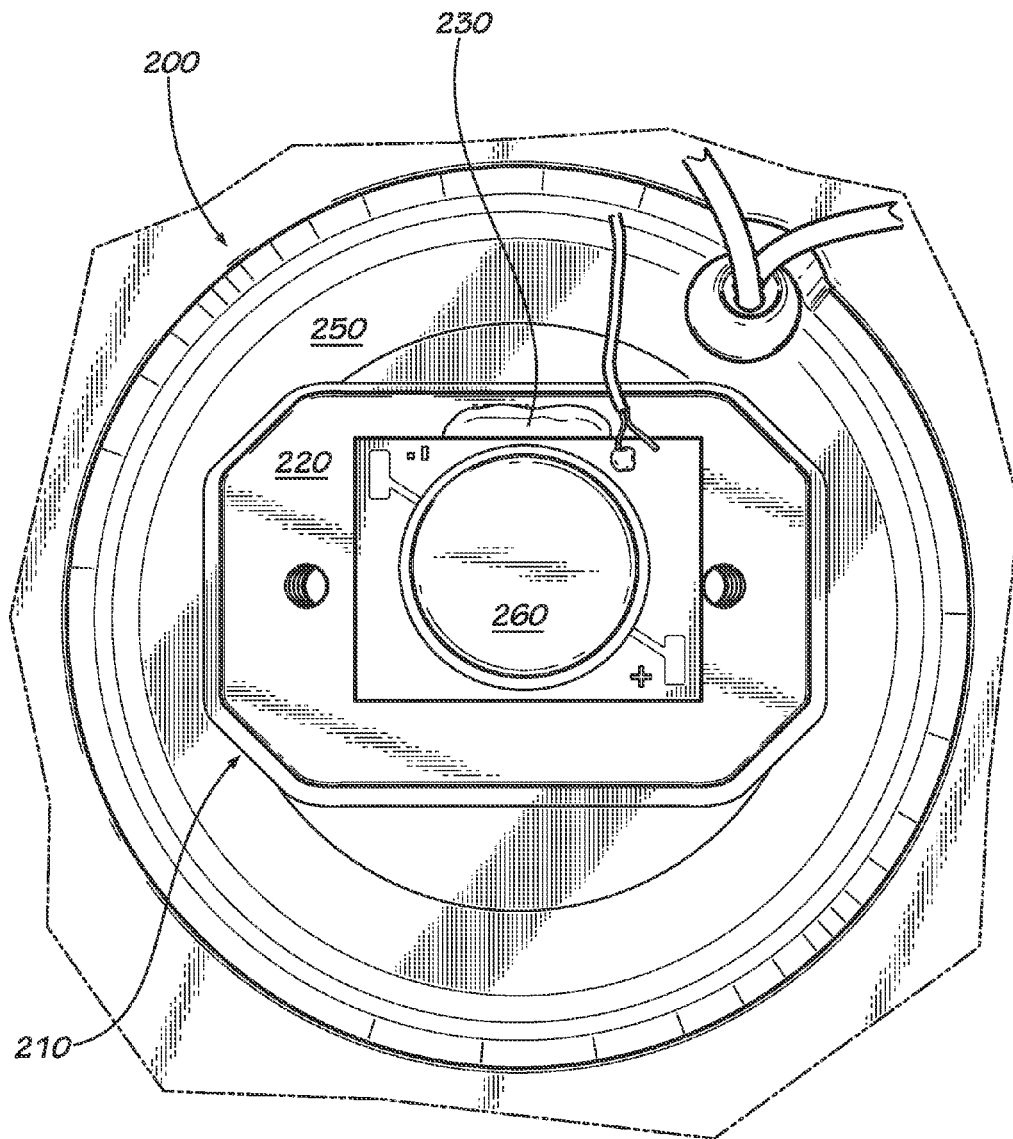


FIG. 5

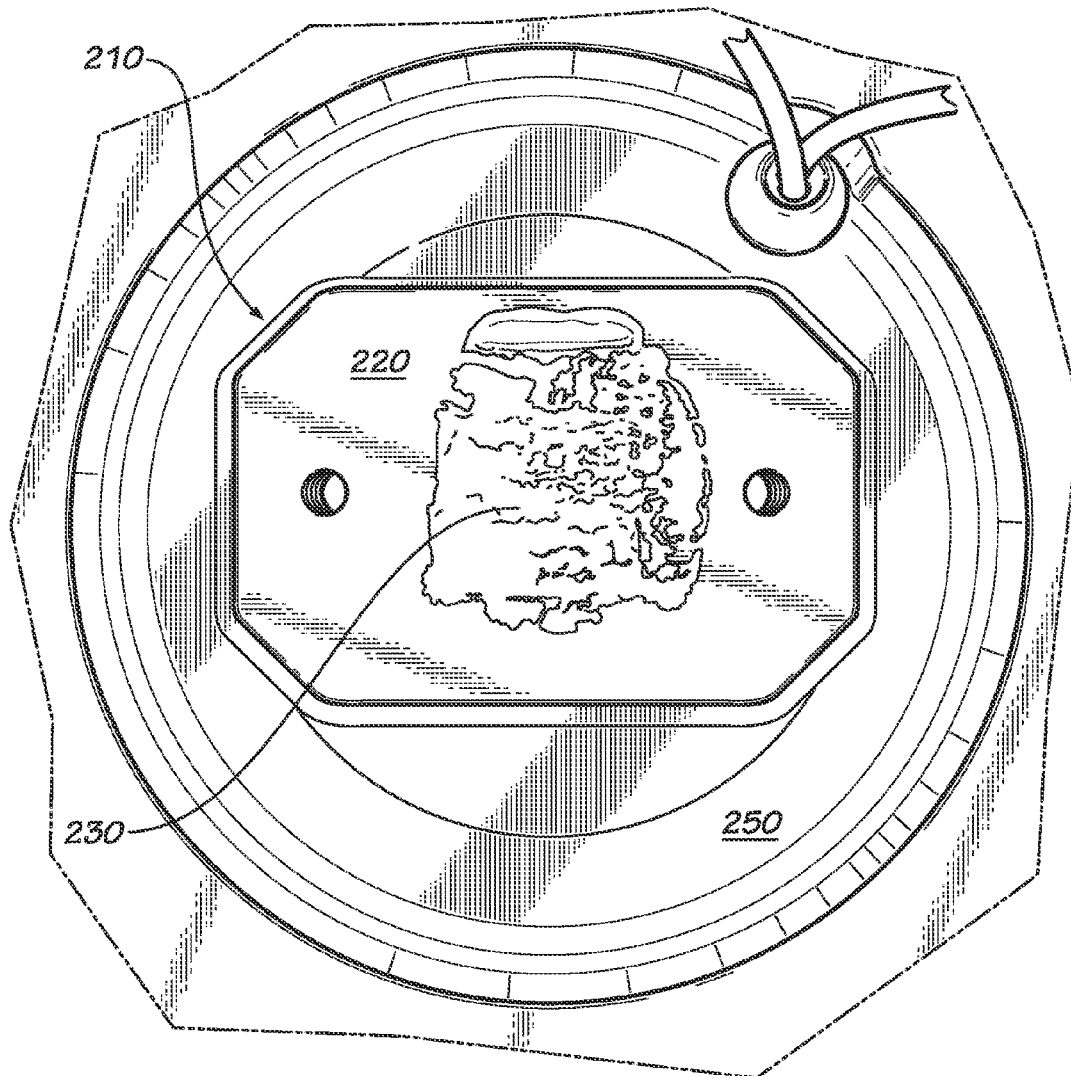


FIG. 6

1

HETEROGENEOUS THERMAL INTERFACE**RELATED APPLICATION**

The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/768,889, filed Feb. 25, 2013, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by this reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the invention provide a heterogeneous thermal interface for electrically insulating high voltage electronic devices while also improving heat dissipation from such devices.

BACKGROUND

Electronic devices, such as, but not limited to, printed circuit boards ("PCBs") populated with light emitting diodes ("LEDs") or chip-on-board ("COB") LEDs, are typically required to include a material with high dielectric strength to electrically isolate the electronic device from the substrate on which it is mounted. However, these devices also require high performance thermal interfaces for effectively conducting heat away from the device during operation. Dielectric materials typically have poor thermal properties, and thermal interface materials typically have poor dielectric properties. One solution is to use two distinct layers—a dielectric layer on top of a thermal interface layer. This dual layer configuration, however, results in a significant reduction in thermal performance.

Another solution, shown in the COB system **100** in FIGS. **1** and **2**, is to use a commercially available material that has been designed for the purpose of combining dielectric strength and thermal conductivity. Exemplary materials include, but are not limited to, silicone- and fiberglass-based thermally conductive insulator pads (e.g., Sil-Pad, manufactured by the Bergquist Company or Cho-Therm, manufactured by Parker Hannifin Corporation), acrylic-based thermal interface pads (e.g., 5589H, manufactured by 3M Company), and coated graphite sheets (e.g., HITHERM, manufactured by GrafTech International Holdings, Inc.). In such an embodiment, the thermal interface **110** is a homogeneous material that is mounted on a substrate **120**. The electronic device **130** is, in turn, mounted onto the thermal interface. The thermal interface includes dielectric properties to electrically isolate the electronic device from the substrate. In addition, it has thermal conductivity properties to transfer heat generated by the electronic device to the substrate, which acts as a heat sink. While the homogeneous thermal interface materials provide an acceptable combination of dielectric and thermal conductivity properties, they fall short of the performance of materials designed to provide only one of these properties.

SUMMARY

The terms "invention," "the invention," "this invention" and "the present invention" used in this patent are intended to refer broadly to all of the subject matter of this patent and the patent claims below. Statements containing these terms should not be understood to limit the subject matter described herein or to limit the meaning or scope of the patent claims below. Embodiments of the invention covered by this patent are defined by the claims below, not this summary. This summary is a high-level overview of various aspects of the invention and introduces some of the concepts that are further

2

described in the Detailed Description section below. This summary is not intended to identify key or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used in isolation to determine the scope of the claimed subject matter. The subject matter should be understood by reference to the entire specification of this patent, all drawings and each claim.

In one embodiment, an electronic apparatus includes a substrate, an electronic device and a thermal interface located between the substrate and the electronic device. The thermal interface includes at least two distinct materials, a dielectric material and a thermally conductive material. The dielectric material includes a cutout into which the thermally conductive material is located.

The electronic device may include a perimeter. In some embodiments, the thermally conductive material is located between the substrate and the electronic device such that the thermally conductive material does not extend beyond the perimeter.

In certain embodiments, the dielectric material completely surrounds the perimeter. In other embodiments, the dielectric material is located between the substrate and electronic device proximate components on the electronic device that are susceptible to arcing such that the dielectric material protects the substrate from arcing from the components.

In an embodiment the apparatus is an electronic lighting apparatus. The electronic device may include at least one printed circuit board having at least one light emitting diode located thereon or include at least one chip-on-board light emitting diode.

The dielectric material may include one or more of an insulator, a polypropylene insulator, fish paper, aramid paper, inorganic paper, a polyimide based material, a silicone-based material, a fiberglass-based material, an acrylic-based material, and a coated graphite material. In certain embodiments the dielectric material is a polyimide film.

The thermally conductive material may include one or more of thermal grease, a grease replacement pad, thermal tape, a phase change material, a gap filler, a thermal gel, a silicone-based material, a fiberglass-based material, an acrylic-based material, and a coated graphite material. In some embodiments the thermally conductive material is a thermal gel.

The electronic device may operate at a temperature at least 10° C. lower than an electronic apparatus that does not include the thermal interface.

In an embodiment, a method for making an electronic apparatus includes locating a dielectric material on a substrate, the dielectric material having a cutout. A thermally conductive material is located within the cutout, the dielectric material and thermally conductive material forming a thermal interface. An electronic device is located on the thermal interface. Various embodiments of the method are described herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Illustrative embodiments of the present invention are described in detail below with reference to the following drawing figures:

FIG. **1** is a top perspective view of a prior art COB system utilizing a homogeneous thermal interface.

FIG. **2** is a top view of the prior art COB system of FIG. **1** in a partially assembled state.

FIG. **3** is a top view of a heterogeneous thermal interface according to the present invention in a first partially assembled state.

3

FIG. 4 is a top view of a heterogeneous thermal interface according to the present invention in a second partially assembled state.

FIG. 5 is a top view of a COB system including a heterogeneous thermal interface according to the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a top view of the COB system of FIG. 5 with the COB removed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The subject matter of embodiments of the present invention is described here with specificity to meet statutory requirements, but this description is not necessarily intended to limit the scope of the claims. The claimed subject matter may be embodied in other ways, may include different elements or steps, and may be used in conjunction with other existing or future technologies. This description should not be interpreted as implying any particular order or arrangement among or between various steps or elements except when the order of individual steps or arrangement of elements is explicitly described.

With reference to FIGS. 3-6 and as shown in the figures with an exemplary COB system **200**, a thermal interface **210** includes at least two discrete materials: a first, dielectric material **220** and a second, thermally conductive material **230**. The dielectric material **220** may include a cutout **240** into which the thermally conductive material **230** is positioned. The thermal interface **210** is thus heterogeneous in that the two materials **220**, **230** are distinct from each other and generally do not contact each other except at the interface between the two materials **220**, **230**. This construction can be much less expensive than using specialized materials that are engineered to exhibit both thermal and dielectric properties.

One side of the thermal interface **210** may be mounted on a substrate **250**. The substrate **250** may be anything, including but not limited to a component of a light fixture, such as a heat sink or reflector. An electronic device **260** (e.g., COB LED, PCB with LEDs, etc.) is mounted on the other side of the thermal interface. A COB LED is shown in the figures and described below but the electronic device certainly is not limited to that. Rather, the heterogeneous thermal interface **210** is contemplated for use with many different types of electronic devices, including, but not limited to, PCBs with LEDs, microchips, microcircuits, etc. The electronic device **260** (e.g., COB LED) is mounted substantially or completely over the second, thermally conductive material **230**. In this manner, the first, dielectric material **220** extends around the perimeter of the electronic device **260** and protects the substrate **250** from arcing from the electrical components on the electronic device **260**. Further, because the second, thermally conductive material **230** is in direct contact with the electronic device **260** and the substrate **250**, heat generated by the electronic device **260** during use is conducted along the thermal path from the electronic device **260** to the second, thermally conductive material **230** and then to the substrate **250**.

In some embodiments, the first, dielectric material **220** may be any material with good dielectric strength, including but not limited to polypropylene insulators (e.g., Formex™, manufactured by ITW Forme), fish paper or aramid paper (e.g., Nomex®, manufactured by DuPont), inorganic papers (e.g., ThermaVolt™, manufactured by 3M Company), and polyimide films (e.g., Kapton®, manufactured by DuPont). The first, dielectric material **220** may also be any of the materials identified in the Background above. In another embodiment, the dielectric material **220** is a polyimide film, such as Kapton®, manufactured by DuPont.

4

In certain embodiments, the second, thermally conductive material **230** may be any material with good thermally conductive properties, including but not limited to, thermal greases (e.g., Dow Corning® 340 Heat Sink Compound, manufactured by Dow Corning Corporation), grease replacement pads (e.g., Q-Pad, manufactured by The Bergquist Company), thermal tapes (e.g., THERMATTACH, from Parker Hannifin Corporation), phase change materials (e.g., THERMFLOW, manufactured by Parker Hannifin Corporation), and gap fillers (e.g., T-Putty, manufactured by Laird Technologies). The second, thermally conductive material **230** may also be any of the materials identified in the Background above. In another embodiment, the thermally conductive material **230** is a thermal gel such as THERM-A-GAP™ GEL30, available from Parker Hannifin Corporation. In some embodiments, the thermal gel does not have substantial adhesive properties, but, because it is sandwiched between the substrate and the electronic device **260**, it is retained between these components. In other embodiments, the thermal gel may have adhesive properties so that it will adhere to the substrate **250** and electronic device **260** and provide strong contact (and thermal conductivity) between these components.

While the **220** dielectric material is described above as located around the perimeter of the electronic device **260**, it will be appreciated that it need not completely surround the electronic device **260**; the dielectric material **220** may be located adjacent only those portions of the electronic device **260** in which arcing is a concern. In such embodiments, it would be possible to increase the amount of thermally conductive material **230** in the thermal interface **210** relative to the dielectric material **220** to enhance heat transfer from the electronic device **260** to the substrate **250**.

In some embodiments, a light fixture may include a substrate **250**, a heterogeneous thermal interface **210** (such as that described above) mounted on the substrate **250**, and an electronic device **260** such as a COB LED assembly. The substrate **250** may include one or a plurality of heterogeneous thermal interfaces **210** with an electronic device **260** mounted to each thermal interface **210**. In another embodiment, multiple electronic device assemblies **260** may be mounted onto a single thermal interface **210**. In such an embodiment, a dielectric material **220**, such as a sheet of dielectric material, can include a plurality of cutouts **240** with a thermally conductive material **230** located within each of the cutouts **240** and an electronic device **260** located over each cutout **240** and its associated thermally conductive material **230**.

In other embodiments, methods for manufacturing a light fixture include mounting a dielectric material **220** having at least one cutout **240** therein onto a substrate **250** in the fixture (e.g., housing, heat sink, reflector, etc.), inserting a thermally conductive material **230** into each of the at least one cutouts **240**, and mounting an electronic device **260** such as a COB LED assembly over each of the at least one cutouts **240** such that the thermally conductive material **230** is sandwiched between each of the electronic devices **260** and the substrate **250**. In some embodiments, the dielectric material **220** includes one cutout **240** and one electronic device **260**, with a thermally conductive material **230** sandwiched between the substrate **250** and the electronic device **260**. In further embodiments, the dielectric material **220** includes a plurality of cutouts **240** and electronic devices **260**, with a thermally conductive material positioned within each of the cutouts **240** and sandwiched between the substrate **250** and its associated electronic device **260**.

In yet other embodiments, a heterogeneous thermal interface **210** may be formed prior to assembling the light fixture.

For example, a cutout **240** may be made in a dielectric material **220** and a thermally conductive material **230** may be positioned within the cutout **240** to form the heterogeneous thermal interface **210**. The heterogeneous thermal interface **210** may then be packaged and shipped separately for use when the light fixture is assembled.

Use of heterogeneous thermal interfaces **210** such as described herein lead to significantly reduced temperatures as compared to prior art constructions such as those utilizing a homogeneous thermal interface (such as described in the Background above) and those using two distinct layers (such as described in the Background above). In some embodiments, the heterogeneous thermal interface results in a reduction in temperature of from about 10° C. to about 70° C. as compared to constructions without a heterogeneous thermal interface, such as those using a homogeneous thermal interface or two distinct layers. In other embodiments, the heterogeneous thermal interface results in a reduction of at least 10° C. as compared to prior constructions, or at least a 20° C. reduction, at least a 30° C. reduction, at least a 40° C. reduction, at least a 50° C. reduction or even at least a 60° C. reduction.

Tests were conducted comparing the thermal efficacy of embodiments of the heterogeneous thermal interface **210** with COB LEDs against known thermal interfaces used on the same COB LEDs. Various thermal interfaces (described under "Interface Type" in Table 1 below) were tested with five different types of COB LEDs (denoted by 2, 4, 5, and T5). The COB LEDs were activated and allowed to reach a steady state temperature (approximately 2 minutes after activation).

TABLE 1

Row	Interface Type		COB Designator			
			2	4	5	T5
A	None	No interface	116	101		
B	Homogeneous	GrafTech eGRAF® HT-1205AP (AP: adhesive on one side; plastic on other)			87.2	
C	Homogeneous	Sur-Seal Sur Cool™ SFR 200V	112			
D	Dielectric Only	Dupont Kapton® 100MT (no adhesive)	128	112		
E	Dielectric Only	Dupont Kapton® 100MT + 3M PSA (pressure sensitive adhesive)	129	129		
F	Layered	Dupont Kapton® 100MT + GrafTech eGRAF® HT-1205A (A: adhesive on one side; no additional adhesive)	106	92		
G	Layered	Dupont Kapton® 100MT (no adhesive) + Parker Chomerics GEL30		81		
H	Heterogeneous	Dupont Kapton® 100MT (no adhesive) with center cutout + Parker Chomerics GEL30		69		
I	Heterogeneous	Dupont Kapton® 100MT + 3M PSA with center cutout + Parker Chomerics GEL30	70.5	65.8	64.7	65.5
J	Layered	Dupont Kapton® 100MT + Bergquist Q-pad 3 grease replacement			113	
K	Thermal Only	Bergquist Q-pad 3 grease replacement			97	
L	Thermal Only	Bergquist Q-pad 3 grease replacement after heat/cool cycle			95.2	

** Temperature [° C.] measured using thermal camera, 2 min. after energizing COB

At the 2 minute mark, the temperature of the COB LEDs was tested and the temperature measurements are reflected in Table 1. Embodiments of the heterogeneous thermal interface (Rows H and I in Table 1) led to a COB LED temperature reduction of between 12° and 60° compared to various constructions using known thermal interfaces. Embodiments of the heterogeneous thermal interface reduced the COB temperature by 12° C. compared to a thermal interface having a

layered construction such as described in the Background above (see Row G in Table 1). Embodiments of the heterogeneous thermal interface reduced the temperature by 43-63° C. compared to those using a dielectric alone (see Rows D and E in Table 1). Improved thermal management of the LEDs is desirable because, as LEDs run hotter, they produce less light, degrade more quickly, and are at higher risk for catastrophic failure. Photometric testing has shown that use of a heterogeneous thermal interface such as disclosed herein leads to a 2.3% increase in lumen output (compared to a homogeneous interface) because of the LED temperature reduction.

Different arrangements of the components depicted in the drawings or described above, as well as components and steps not shown or described are possible. Similarly, some features and subcombinations are useful and may be employed without reference to other features and subcombinations. Embodiments of the invention have been described for illustrative and not restrictive purposes, and alternative embodiments will become apparent to readers of this patent. Accordingly, the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above or depicted in the drawings, and various embodiments and modifications can be made without departing from the scope of the claims below.

That which is claimed is:

1. An electronic apparatus comprising:

a substrate;

an electronic device; and

a thermal interface located between the substrate and the electronic device, the thermal interface comprising at least two distinct materials, the at least two distinct

materials comprising a dielectric material and a thermally conductive material, wherein the dielectric material comprises a cutout into which the thermally conductive material is located, and wherein the electronic device is in direct contact with the thermally conductive material.

2. The electronic apparatus of claim 1, wherein the electronic device comprises a perimeter and the thermally con-

7

ductive material is located between the substrate and the electronic device such that the thermally conductive material does not extend beyond the perimeter.

3. The electronic apparatus of claim 2, wherein the dielectric material completely surrounds the perimeter.

4. The electronic apparatus of claim 1, wherein the electronic device comprises components susceptible to arcing and the dielectric material is located between the substrate and the electronic device proximate the components such that the dielectric material protects the substrate from arcing from the components.

5. The electronic apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is an electronic lighting apparatus.

6. The electronic apparatus of claim 1, wherein the electronic device comprises at least one printed circuit board having at least one light emitting diode located thereon.

7. The electronic apparatus of claim 1, wherein the electronic device comprises at least one chip-on-board light emitting diode.

8. The electronic apparatus of claim 1, wherein the dielectric material comprises one or more of an insulator, a polypropylene insulator, fish paper, aramid paper, inorganic paper, a polyimide based material, a silicone-based material, a fiberglass-based material, an acrylic-based material, and a coated graphite material.

9. The electronic apparatus of claim 8, wherein the dielectric material comprises a polyimide based material, the polyimide based material comprising a polyimide film.

10. The electronic apparatus of claim 1, wherein the thermally conductive material comprises one or more of thermal grease, a grease replacement pad, thermal tape, a phase change material, a gap filler, a thermal gel, a silicone-based material, a fiberglass-based material, an acrylic-based material, and a coated graphite material.

11. The electronic apparatus of claim 10, wherein the thermally conductive material comprises a thermal gel.

12. The electronic apparatus of claim 1, wherein the electronic device operates at a temperature within a range of 64.7° C. to 70.5° C.

13. A method for making an electronic apparatus, comprising:

8

locating a dielectric material on a substrate, the dielectric material comprising a cutout;

locating a thermally conductive material within the cutout, the dielectric material and thermally conductive material forming a thermal interface; and

locating an electronic device on the thermal interface such that the electronic device is in direct contact with the thermally conductive material of the thermal interface.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the electronic device comprises a perimeter and the thermally conductive material is located between the substrate and the electronic device such that the thermally conductive material does not extend beyond the perimeter.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the dielectric material completely surrounds the perimeter.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the electronic device comprises components susceptible to arcing and the dielectric material is located between the substrate and the electronic device proximate the components such that the dielectric material protects the substrate from arcing from the components.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein the apparatus is an electronic lighting apparatus comprising:

at least one printed circuit board having at least one light emitting diode located thereon; or

at least one chip-on-board light emitting diode.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein the dielectric material comprises one or more of an insulator, a polypropylene insulator, fish paper, aramid paper, inorganic paper, a polyimide based material, a silicone-based material, a fiberglass-based material, an acrylic-based material, and a coated graphite material.

19. The method of claim 13, wherein the thermally conductive material comprises one or more of thermal grease, a grease replacement pad, thermal tape, a phase change material, a gap filler, a thermal gel, a silicone-based material, a fiberglass-based material, an acrylic-based material, and a coated graphite material.

20. The method of claim 13, wherein the dielectric material comprises a polyimide film and the thermally conductive material comprises a thermal gel.

* * * * *